

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
PHARMACY BOARD

South Shore Professional Building

#7-20424 TCH

P.O. Box 89, Crapaud, P.E.I. COA IJO

Phone: (902) 658-2780 Fax: (902) 658-2198 E-mail: peipharm@pei.aibn.com

Member Organization of the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA)

GUIDELINES

Automated Tablet Dispensers

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The Board has reviewed the use, in community pharmacies, of Baker Cells and various cassette type counting machines. The Board recommends that pharmacy managers review the following points and ensure that there are effective policies in place for automated dispensing machines and that the policies and procedures are clearly communicated to all dispensary staff.

1. Drug Identification

The cell or cassette needs to be identified with the drug name, lot number and expiry date of the stock currently in the cell. It is not acceptable to ignore this requirement on the basis of the drugs being “fast-movers”.

It is also a good idea to include the DIN on the cell label. The person who retrieves the tablets takes the prescription label to the cell and can then compare the DIN on the label with the DIN on the cell.

2. “Topping Up”

Cells and cassettes must never be “topped up”. The containers are to be empty of stock before being refilled. This is to prevent a mixing of lot numbers and expiry dates, and stock bearing different markings.

3. Physically separate look-alike drugs

Look-alike drugs should have their cells well separated to minimize the chance of the wrong drug being accessed in error when several orders have been processed at approximately the same time.